

The Encino Loop Trail is an approximately 7.2-mile-long loop that is located a short distance east of Saucedo Ranger Station. It is a combination of double-track, single-track and graded dirt road. Short stretches of access roads connect the north and south segments. The terrain consists of the low rolling hills and mesas that are characteristic of the central interior portion of the park.

The trail is situated along the upper edge of the Llano Pasture. “Llano” is Spanish for “plain” and is here used to describe a landscape characterized by desert grassland with low hills and rocky outcrops. The vegetation is typical of the Chihuahuan Desert, dominated by creosote bush, sotol, lechuguilla, prickly pear and several species of grasses and cacti.

La Mota Mesa (Cerro la Mota or La Mota Mountain), a feature of the Boffecillos range, is the nearest and most prominent landmark that is situated a short distance to the north along La Mota Road. A second smaller, unnamed mesa lies to the southwest of La Mota that has a distinguishing “gun sight” or “key hole” feature. These two landmarks are easy to find and can be seen from most of the trail. Keep these in sight and there is no getting lost.



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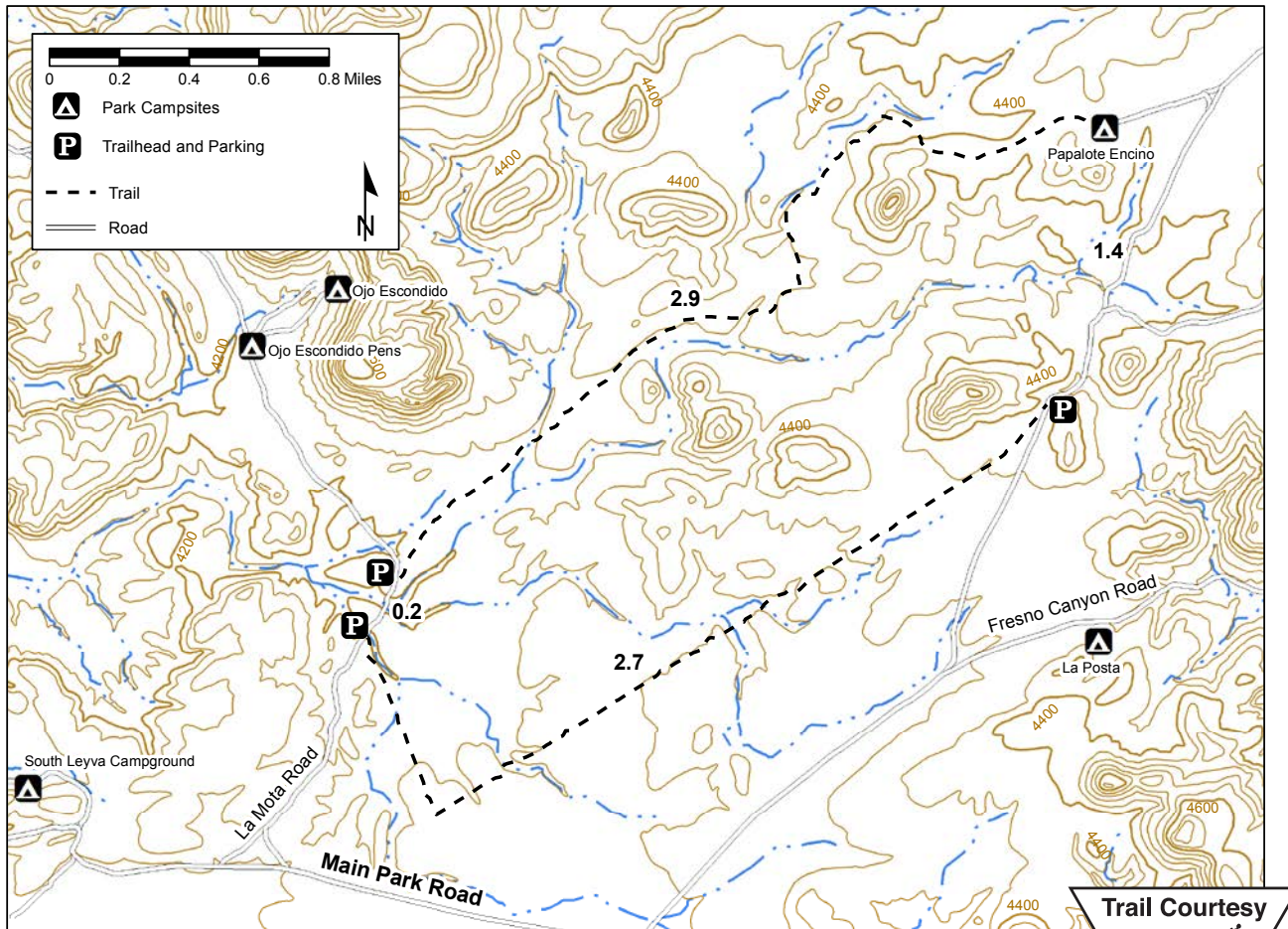
BIG BEND
RANCH
STATE PARK

Encino Trail



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DIRECTIONS

From the Saucedá Ranger Station go west (right) along the main park road for approximately 2 miles. Take a left (north) at La Mota Road and follow it for approximately 1 mile to the Encino Trail Trailhead. Turn right (northeast) and follow the trail approximately 2.9 miles to the Papalote Encino campsite. At the campsite you will exit the trail and follow the road 0.4 miles to the intersection with the main park road. Turn right (south) and follow the main road approximately 1 mile and veer to the right at the Power Line Trail sign to follow the single-track along the old power line road and back to La Mota Road (see map).

These trails can be traveled from either direction and are used by all user groups, so please be courteous of others and yield the right-of-way as indicated. Be mindful of wildlife such as javelina and rattlesnakes and always bring plenty of water!

Equestrians and hikers are welcomed on this trail, but it is mostly enjoyed by mountain bikers as it lacks the uninterrupted vistas of other nearby areas such as the Cinco Tinajas, Horse Trap and Chilicote trails.

For cyclists this trail offers fast flowing single-track with variable terrain. There are a few challenging spots with loose and rocky surfaces and some areas of deep sand. The northern segment is called the Encino Trail and is part of Big Bend Ranch State Park's IMBA-designated Epic Ride that runs from the Barton Warnock Visitor Center to the Saucedá Ranger Station and back, covering over 70 miles of rugged backcountry trails. The southern segment, called the Power Line Trail, follows an old power line road that has been mostly reclaimed by native vegetation and converted to single-track.

This trail is most enjoyable as a loop – traveling from west to east. There are two trailheads along La Mota Road that are marked by trail signs. Vehicle parking is limited along La Mota Road so riding from the Saucedá Ranger Station (approximately 3 miles) is recommended.

Note that riding to the trails from the Saucedá Ranger Station will add approximately 6 miles to the 7.2-mile-long loop, making the round trip 13.2 miles.

